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Exploration and Discovery.

Gezer and its Excavation.—The excavation of Gezer, which the Palestine Exploration Fund now has in hand, is attended with some circumstances of unusual interest. In the first place, this *tell* will be the first in Palestine to be thoroughly explored, all previous work having been comparatively superficial. Again, the place is now owned by those who will keep the excavation open and make the site accessible to tourists. The owners are members of the well-known banking firm of the Berghaims, Jerusalem, and the proximity of the *tell* to the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway favors their purpose. The thoroughness of Mr. R. A. Stewart Macalister in work placed under his charge warrants a feeling of hopefulness that here and elsewhere nothing of value will be overlooked. The city of Gezer, too, was much more important than the places recently excavated, and the identification of the site is complete, as will presently be shown; but the remark of two aged clergymen that they had not heard of such a place may make a brief review of its history useful.

Very early knowledge of it is gained from the Tell Amarna¹ tablets, which have no less than ten references to it. One is found in a letter from Makkedah, a neighboring city. This letter is numbered 112 Berlin,² and reads in part:

To the King my Lord and my Sun, thus Labaya thy servant and the dust of thy feet. At the feet of the King my Lord and my Sun seven times seven times I bow. . . . I am myself a faithful servant, and I have not sinned, and I have not murmured at my tribute. . . . Lo! I strive with the city Gezer (Gazri).

The next letter to be cited is 63 British Museum.³ This was sent from Gezer, and says:

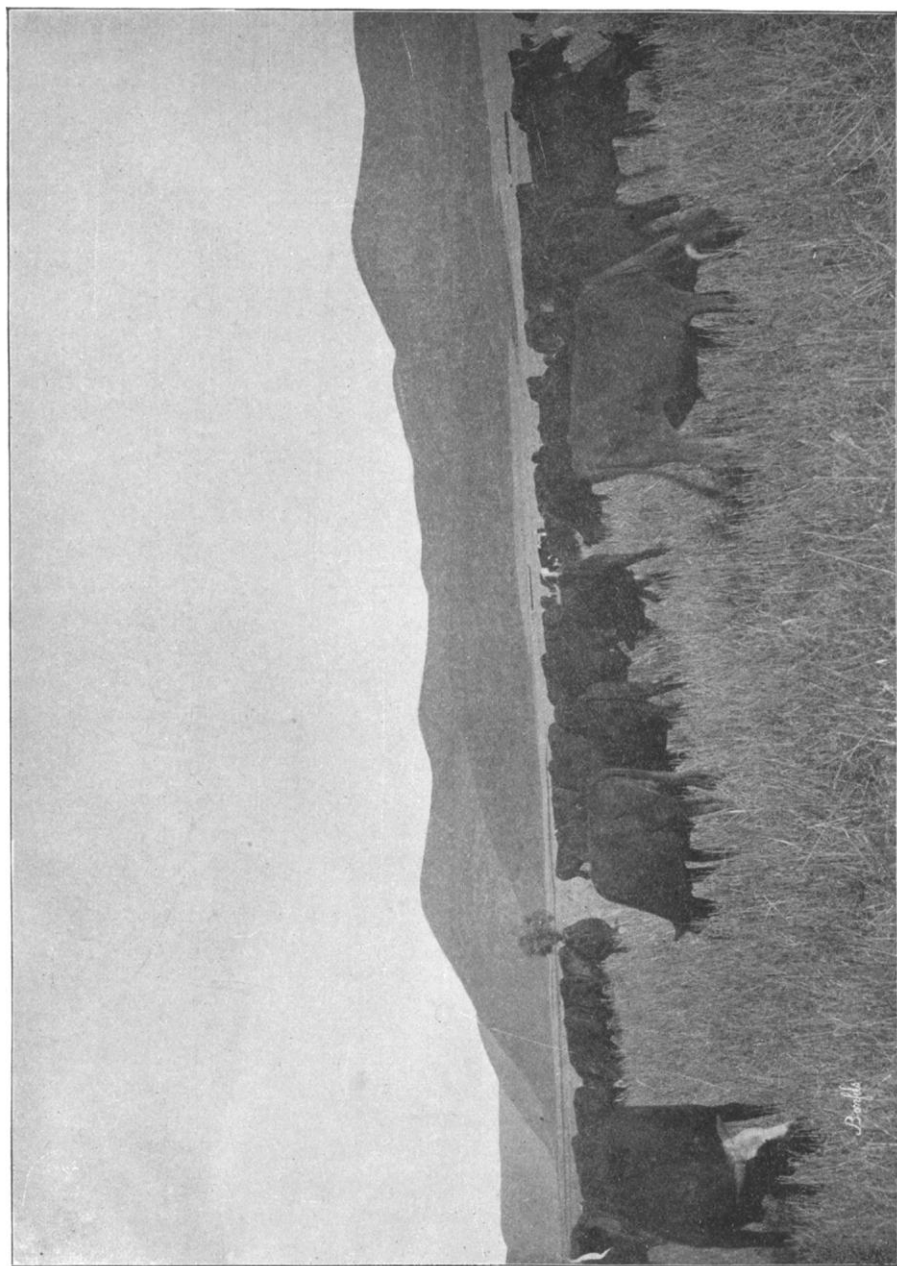
I hear what the King my Lord has sent to me, and the King my Lord dispatches Egyptian soldiers to his servants, and the King my Lord dispatches them as guards.

This implies some expectation on the part of the Egyptian king that Gezer would need strengthening.

¹ *Tell Amarna Tablets*, translated by C. R. CONDER, second edition, London, P. E. Fund, 1894.

² P. 122.

³ P. 134.



THE PLAIN OF JEZREEL AND THE MOUNTAINS OF GILBOA.

Letter 109 Berlin⁴ is from Gezer, and declares that the land is peaceful.

110 Berlin,⁵ however, says that the war is mighty against Gezer, and asks for chariots, whether or not against the Hebrew invasion is not known. 62 British Museum⁶ is apparently of the same time and is still more urgent in its request for chariots. 155 Berlin⁷ mentions Gezer, but is imperfect. 50 British Museum⁸ is more complete. It mentions the writer as "Yapa'a, the chief of the city of Gazri (Gezer), thy servant, the dust of thy feet, a chief captain of thy horse." Conder⁹ refers to the fact that the king of Lachish in Joshua's time (Josh. 10 : 3) was called Japhia, and concludes that the names mean the same person, and that he was king of both places; but this is only an inference.

49 British Museum¹⁰ is also from Yapa'a, who asks for help "against the chief of the men of blood."

51 British Museum¹¹ is also an appeal for help.

In letter 103 Berlin¹² we have an account from Jerusalem to the effect that Gezer has been captured and settled by invaders, whom Conder gives grounds for identifying with the Israelites.

Thotmes III., of the same dynasty with Amenhotep IV. of these tablets, but preceding him, conquered Gezer on his great expedition to the Tigris.¹³

The mentions of Gezer in the Bible begin at Josh. 10 : 33. It is not spoken of as one of the cities which combined against Gibeon and Israel, and it appears only in the statement, placed just after the fall of Lachish, that "Horam, king of Gezer, came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people until he had left him none remaining."

This would imply that Gezer took no part in the battle of Ajalon, but sent a force to the relief of Lachish, which did not fall until the second day of siege, so that Lachish may have sent word to Gezer as soon as Joshua's force was seen approaching, and may have tried to hold out until relieved. The reinforcements from Gezer were too late to serve Lachish by an attack on Joshua, and only in time to be defeated by him. No doubt the five kings had expected to destroy Gibeon with ease, and therefore gathered no larger force. Joshua's arrival and assault threw

⁴ P. 135.

⁶ P. 135.

⁸ P. 137.

¹⁰ P. 138.

⁵ P. 135.

⁷ P. 136.

⁹ Note, p. 137.

¹¹ P. 138.

¹² P. 147.

¹³ MOORE on *Judges*, p. 48, refers on this point to MÜLLER (*Asien u. Europa*, p. 160).

them into confusion and prevented an orderly retreat. Thus Lachish was besieged suddenly; it could not appeal to the cities which had taken the field with it and were now trying to save themselves, and so sent for aid to Gezer which had lost no army at Ajalon.

Joshua did not turn back to besiege Gezer, but went on to Eglon, near by, and thence to Hebron. Gezer was not attacked at all, and we read in Josh. 16:10 that the Ephraimites did not expel the Canaanites from Gezer, but let them remain. When the assignment of cities to the Levites was made, however, Gezer was given to the Kohathites, Josh. 21:21 and 1 Chron. 6:67. We do not hear of Gezer in the time of the Judges, but 1 Chron. 7:28 gives it a certain dignity as head of a district, by speaking of "Gezer with the towns thereof [literally daughters]." David, while sojourning with the Philistines, may have captured Gezer, though some understand differently the mention of Gerzites in 1 Sam. 27:8; 1 Chron. 20:4 refers definitely to Gezer in connection with David's wars, but some understand another name.

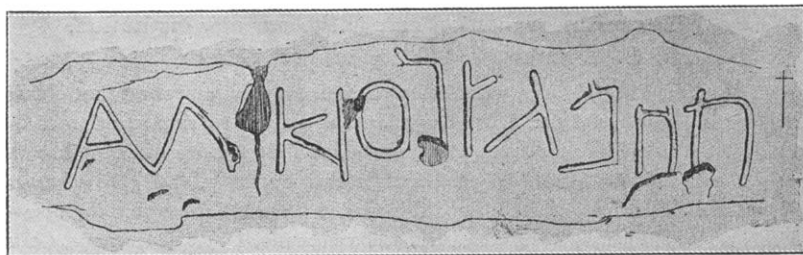
We find that Solomon saw great importance in Gezer, for we read that he built the temple and his own palace and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer, for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burned it with fire, and slain the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife (1 Kings 9:15, 16).

From this it would appear that the city had maintained itself with little or no interference from the Israelites until the Egyptians conquered it for Solomon.

It is not named in the prophets, nor in the New Testament, lying as it did out of the way of those who passed from Egypt to Jerusalem, or from that city northward or eastward. It appears at once in the time of the Maccabees, because it lay right in the line of Syrian campaigns against Jerusalem. Judas had a great victory over Gorgias near there, and pursued his enemies unto Gazera (1 Macc. 4:15); and again Judas was victorious over Nicanor and pursued him from Adasa to Gazera and slew all the troops of Nicanor (*ibid.*, 7:45). Gazera became a Maccabean stronghold, and Jonathan fortified and provisioned it (*ibid.*, 9:52). Simon placed his son John there and made it the headquarters of the Jewish forces (*ibid.*, 13:53). Again, as affairs prospered with Simon, he improved Gazera (*ibid.*, 14:34). Timotheus took refuge there after being defeated by the Jews, and he endured a siege of four days, but the place yielded on the fifth and was the scene of a great massacre (2 Macc. 10:32-37).

Josephus speaks of the place as important just before the Christian era under the name Gadara (*Wars*, I, viii, 5). Under the name Gadara the Dominican monk Burchard, of Mount Sion,¹⁴ mentions it in the thirteenth century, saying that the possession of Ephraim extended from the Jordan to Gadara. Saladin¹⁵ was defeated there by the Christians in 1174, but in 1192 he encamped upon Mount Gizart during his negotiations with Richard for a truce.¹⁶

In our day it has stood, inviting excavation, a little to the south of the carriage road from Jaffa to Jerusalem and a little to the north of the railway. That it was a city site was long manifest from worked stones and fragments of pottery lying about, but it was reserved for M.



AN INSCRIPTION MARKING THE BOUNDARY OF GEZER.

Clermont-Ganneau fully to identify the site by finding its boundary inscriptions. He was led to the place by reading an old Arab chronicle which mentioned adjacent places.¹⁷ Later he visited the place again and found the Messrs. Bergheim clearing out the reservoir and making their possession good in other ways. He observed wine-presses, tombs, and steps cut in the rock to make approaches to former houses. The citadel stood in the center on the summit of the hill.¹⁸

The next year the place was visited by Lieutenant Conder, who mentions the fine spring and "long walls of great unhewn blocks."¹⁹ Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake was also a visitor, and collected a few antiquities.²⁰ Still later, in 1874, came M. Clermont-Ganneau²¹ again, and then he found a bilingual inscription on a horizontal slab, which read in Greek ΑΛΚΙΟ and in Hebrew תהם גזר. The first word he was led to refer to Alkios, governor of the city, who is named on a sarcophagus found at

¹⁴ *Pilgrims' Texts*, Vol. XII, p. 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 76.

¹⁶ G. A. SMITH, *Historical Geography of Palestine*, p. 217.

¹⁷ *Quarterly Statement, P. E. Fund*, January, 1873, p. 78.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1874, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 276-80.

Lydda, and whom he assigns to the time of the Maccabees.²² The second part he reads as two words, viz., **תהום** for **תהום**, meaning "limit" or "boundary," and **גזר**, the name Gezer. Although the word **תהום** is Talmudic, there has been no hesitation in the general acceptance of the interpretation and identification. Very unfortunately an attempt was made to cut out this and a similar inscription found on another corner of the city, which made much richly deserved trouble for the Frenchman (see partial account in *Archæological Researches*, pp. 224 ff.), and this may account for the unusual delay in granting the firman; but all difficulties are cleared away at last.

It is interesting to note that the director of the American School in Jerusalem has tendered his aid to Mr. Macalister, and thus that a share of the resulting reputation may fall to our new institution.

Professor G. A. Smith grows eloquent over Gezer:

Shade of King Horam, what hosts of men have fallen round that citadel of yours! Within sight of every Egyptian and every Assyrian invasion of the land, Gezer has also seen Alexander pass by, and the legions of Rome in unusual flight, and the armies of the Cross struggle, waver, and give way, and Napoleon come and go. If all could rise who have fallen around its base—Ethiopians, Hebrews, Assyrians, Arabs, Turcomans, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Saxons, Mongols—what a rehearsal of the Judgment Day it would be! Few of the travelers who now rush across the plain realize that the first conspicuous hill they pass in Palestine is also one of the most thickly haunted—even in that narrow land into which history has so crowded itself. Up none of the other valleys of the Shephebah has history so surged as up and down Ajalon and past Gezer, for none are so open to the north, nor present so easy a passage to Jerusalem.²³

[Mr. Macalister began excavation at the site of Gezer on June 14 last, and has continued his work up to the present time. He ran a trench 40 feet wide from north to south across the eastern hill, the greatest depth being 18½ feet. At the last writing a second trench was begun, parallel with, and to the west of, the first. Many interesting finds are reported, all of high antiquity. The evidence indicates four successive occupations of the hill: (1) a pre-Semitic, probably neolithic race, who practised cremation; (2) an early Semitic race of the copper and early bronze age; (3) and (4) two later Semitic occupations, whose chronology is not yet determined. A most interesting account of the discoveries up to September 10 is contained in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* for October, 1902, pp. 317-75.—ED.]

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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

²² *Ibid.*, 1875, p. 57.

²³ *Hist. Geog.*, p. 217.